

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017*

**Remarks to United States Troops at Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy**  
*May 27, 2017*

*The First Lady.* What a beautiful place! We had the greatest time here. And we did a lot of great stuff. And I want to thank you very much. This has been an incredible trip, and great strides have been made. My husband worked very hard on behalf of our country, and I'm very proud of him.

This trip has also been incredible for me as First Lady. In Saudi Arabia, I visited children at local school and a call center with all-female employees. In Israel, I spent time with some children at Haddasah Medical Center along with Mrs. Netanyahu. In Rome, I was honored and blessed to be granted audience with His Holiness, Pope Francis, followed by a very special visit to Bambino Gesù Children Hospital.

Just hours after leaving, a young boy I spent time with found out he had received a new heart donor. Receiving that news is a moment I will never forget, and I wish him a speedy recovery.

In Brussels, I met with Queen Mathilde and participated in a forum on preventing the online exploitation of children, then paid a visit to the patients at Queen Fabiola's Children Hospital.

This trip, for me, has been very special and I will never forget the women and children I met. As one of the kids at the hospital that I visit said in a picture he drew for me: "We are all the same."

I also want to take a moment to thank you all for the sacrifices you make on behalf of our country. It is because of your selfless commitment that we enjoy the freedoms we have today. And to the families who endure time apart, or constant moves to the base, your sacrifices do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Thank you, and God bless you.

And now it is my great honor to introduce my husband, the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

*Audience members.* U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

*The President.* I've got to get the lipstick off. Is it off? [*Laughter*] Thank you, honey. Thank you both. That's great.

And I'm trying to figure out who's in that helicopter that is coming in. [*Laughter*] It may be Prime Minister Abe. It may be Justin from Canada. Great people. We made a lot of good friends this week, I'll tell you, a lot of good friends. They're good people.

America is very blessed with a lot of great diplomats—and I have to say this, as she just walks over here—but I don't think the United States could possibly have a better emissary than our magnificent and wonderful person, our First Lady, Melania. Thank you. Thank you, honey. The countries of the world have a large number of disagreements, but they all agree with me on that one, that I can tell you. [*Laughter*] So everywhere we go, it's the same old story. So great job.

And you know, we've been gone for now a long time. Everywhere I go—but we have been gone for close to 9 days—this will be 9 days. And I think we hit a homerun no matter where we

are. We're thrilled to be here right now. And we're getting on that very big plane; we're heading back to Washington and the United States. But to be with you at our great Naval Air Station is wonderful. I can think of no better way to conclude our first foreign trip than to spend the time with you right here, with the incredible men and women of the United States Navy, and with all of our brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, and our great civilians who support them, right? A very proud Nation salutes you. A very, very proud nation. And I'll tell you what, we are very, very proud of you.

Every single day, you protect the safety and security of the American people and provide a symbol of hope, freedom, and justice for the world. To our friends and allies, you are the ultimate reassurance; to our enemies, you are the ultimate deterrent.

You're the metal spine forged out of the fires of American strength. And you notice how much stronger we're getting? Have you—feeling it? Are you feeling it? All that new equipment just coming in. You saw what we did with our military budget, way up. Took a little heat on that one, but it's okay with me. [*Laughter*] You are the men and women who make up the most powerful military in the world, and under my administration—as you know, you've seen it, right—under my administration, stronger and stronger every single day.

I want to thank Captain Brent Trickle for leading the American presence at the hub of the Med—you know what that is, right? The hub of the Med. Captain Trickle, considering everything your team has done to prepare for this visit—and you really have done a lot, I've seen it—feel free to sound liberty call as soon as wheels are up. Okay? That's sounds—maybe I'll stay down with you and celebrate together and just wave.

But before going any further, I also want to express, on behalf of the United States, our gratitude to our Italian and NATO allies here today. We have a lot of them. You're stationed at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, working side by side with Americans to confront the threats associated with the tremendous violence, suffering, and instability across North Africa and the Middle East. To every servicemember from Italy, from a NATO country, we want to thank you for your friendship and for partnering with us in the fight to defeat terrorism and protect civilization. [*Applause*] Better believe it.

Terrorism is a threat—bad threat—to all of humanity—and together, we will overcome this threat. We will win.

But none of what we achieve would be possible without our wonderful military spouses and families. Each of you makes these great sacrifices for our country as well. Let's hear it for the military spouses, please. We will always support you, and we will never, ever forget you. That I can tell you.

There's one more very special group I have to thank, and that is our eighth-grade students right here in Sigonella. Where are they? Oh, here they are. I've been hearing a lot about you. In January, the eighth-grade class at Sigonella came all the way from Washington to march in my Inaugural Parade. Right? Look at you. They're all so happy. Young. You're going to have a great life, right? Great life. Thank you very much. I have to say, are you all glad you did it?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* Thank you, honey.

It's an image I will always remember: your smiling faces right out in front of the White House, carrying that great, big, beautiful American flag. Right? Thank you, kids. You traveled all the way from Italy to support my Inauguration, so today I'm glad to be here. And I traveled

a long way to support you, and it's my honor. Thank you very much. Military children also make great sacrifices for their country, and I want you all to know that America is so proud of you.

As you know, I was here in Sicily to attend very important summit meetings, the meeting of the G-7. It was a tremendously productive meeting, where I strengthened America bonds—we have great bonds with other countries—and with some of our closest allies. We concluded a truly historic week for our country.

Our travels took us to some of the holiest sites in the three Abrahamic religions, and to gatherings of both America's oldest and newest friends. We traveled the world to strengthen longstanding alliances, and to form a new partnership among nations devoted to the task of eradicating the terrorism that plagues our planet. And we've got the people that can do it, believe me. And I am now more hopeful than ever in the possibility that nations of many faiths and from many religions, and from many regions—all over, all over—can join together in a common cause.

The barbaric attack in Manchester—and the massacre of innocent young lives—underscores the depth of the evil we face, and the urgent need for us to join forces to absolutely and totally defeat it. I met with Prime Minister May and expressed the absolute solidarity of the American people.

And just yesterday Coptic Christians in Egypt were viciously gunned down in another vile terrorist attack, one that took the lives of beautiful Egyptian children and others. These murderous attacks grieve our souls, but they also steel—and I mean "steel," like in steel—our resolve. Together, civilized nations will crush the terrorists, block their funding, strip them of their territory, and drive them out of this Earth.

My first visit during my travels took me to Saudi Arabia, where I had the honor of participating in a historic summit with the leaders of more than 50 Muslim and Arab nations—hosted by King Salman, a wise leader who expressed his strong desire to work with the United States not only to confront terrorism, but also the extremist ideology behind terrorism.

The nations of the Middle East have endured one terrorist attack after another, and I called on them to take on the burden of fighting this evil that has killed so many innocent Muslims. During this unprecedented gathering, we opened a new center to combat extremist ideology, launched a task force to block funding for terrorists, and agreed to massive economic development deals, the likes of which there has never been, that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the United States, building the equipment that has just been ordered by Saudi Arabia.

We also further isolated the Iranian regime over its hostile and destabilizing actions and reaffirmed that Iran must never be allowed to obtain, under any circumstances, a nuclear weapon.

I was deeply encouraged to hear from the leaders of many Muslim and Arab nations that they are ready to take on a greater role in combating terrorism and providing young Muslims in their region with a future of safety and a future of opportunity.

Next, I went to Jerusalem, where I reaffirmed our unbreakable bond with the State of Israel. There, we continued our discussion about fighting terrorism and crushing the organizations and ideologies that drive it. I went to the Western Wall, a monument to the perseverance of the Jewish people. I also prayed at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and

walked those sacred halls. I was awed by the majesty and beauty of that Holy Land and the faith and reverence of the devoted people who live there. All children, from all faiths, deserve a future of hope and peace, a future that does honor to God.

I visited Bethlehem, a city so precious to so many, and met with the Palestinian leader, President Abbas. He assured me he is willing to reach for peace with Israel in good faith—and I believe he will—and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who assured me that he, too, was ready to reach for peace. He's a friend of mine, and he means it.

From Israel, we came to Italy. In Rome, I was inspired by the beauty of Saint Peter's Basilica and even more inspired by meeting with Pope Francis; we had a great talk. It was truly a honor to meet the Pope and to pray for peace on those hallowed grounds.

Then, I traveled to two summits with our key allies, first at a NATO summit in Brussels, where we agreed to improve the burden sharing among members of our alliance and to further confront the shared threat of terrorism. Other member nations must pay more. The U.S. is currently paying much more than any other nation, and that is not fair to the United States or the United States taxpayer. So we're working on it, and I will tell you, a big difference over the last year. Money is actually starting to pour into NATO from countries that would not have been doing what they're doing now had I not been elected, I can tell you that. Money is starting to pour in. It's only fair to the United States. We want to be treated fairly. And we're behind NATO all the way, but we want to be treated fairly. All of us will be more safe and secure if everyone fulfills their obligations the way they're supposed to.

Right? Look at this man. He's over there; he's agreeing with me a hundred percent. Most people agree with it.

Next, I attended the G-7 right here in Sicily, and made great progress toward very, very vital goals. I laid out my vision for economic growth and fair trade in support of good-paying jobs, and even great-paying middle class jobs and more. And I called for much greater security and cooperation on matters of both terrorism, immigration, migration, to protect our citizens.

From Saudi Arabia, to Israel, to NATO, to the G-7, we made extraordinary gains on this historic trip to advance the security and prosperity of the United States, our friends and our allies. And we paved the way for a new era of cooperation among the nations of the world to defeat the common enemy of terrorism and provide our children with a much more hopeful future. You're going to have a great, great future. You're going to have a safe future because of your parents and other people in this room.

That is why I knew I had to conclude my trip right here in Sigonella, with the dedicated servicemembers who make the future so bright. So proud, because I am so proud of the future you're going to have. Are you all proud of the future you're going to have? You'd better believe it, right? Dad, mom, we're all proud of it. We're all proud of it. We're proud of our country.

The men and women of the United States military have been the greatest force for peace and justice in the history of the world. I want you to know that you have a Commander in Chief who will never, ever forget. Never, ever. You will always be remembered number one. Just remember that. Always. I will give you my complete and unshakable support.

We have already made a historic investment in defense spending—you've been reading about it—because we believe—and you know this. What's the expression? Peace through strength. Peace through strength, right? You'll understand that when you get a little bit older. Peace through strength. And that's what we're going to have. We're going to have a lot of

strength, but we're going to have a lot of peace. We will buy the planes, the ships, vehicles, and equipment you need to get your job done and to come home, safe and sound, back to your families.

I also know that the single greatest strength of our Armed Forces is you—you, all of you—the dedicated, really tough and really disciplined service men and women who bravely fight in our name. You not only know the pain of sacrifice, but you also know the tremendous rewards of military service, of being part of something much larger than even yourselves. You know what it means to be part of a military team in which men and women are bound together in a sacred covenant of trust: to serve together, to sacrifice together, and to fight together. And by the way, and to win together, because you're going to win. You're going to do a lot of winning. You're going to do a lot of winning. And my pledge to you is that we will always protect those who protect us. You are protecting us, and we will always remember that and we will always, always protect you.

Americans fought and died to liberate Europe from the evils of nazism—you know that—and fascism. American military power helped to free the world from the oppression of communism. And today, Americans like you are battling the sinister forces of terrorism throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the world. American military history is rich with noble traditions, harrowing missions, and selfless heroes like your parents. But at its core, the moral of the story is always the same: It is the story of good overcoming evil.

You have poured out your hearts, your souls, and even your blood for this Nation, and we will pour out our gratitude to you in return. We will show our gratitude especially this Monday, on Memorial Day, when we pause to thank God for the heroes who have laid down their lives for our freedom. *[Applause]* Right?

Among those heroes was a young Navy sailor from Omaha. His name was John Joseph Parle. Parle enlisted in the Navy after the attack on Pearl Harbor, completed midshipman training at Notre Dame, and soon ended up not far from here, in the waters of the Mediterranean. On the night of July 9, 1943, Parle was among the tens of thousands of Allied forces preparing for a surprise landing the next morning on the shores of Sicily, right here, about 70 miles away, to be exact. It was to be a major Allied offensive on European soil, and it was important.

On his ship, cloaked in darkness just 6 miles offshore, Parle noticed that a smokescreen device had caught fire in a small boat staged to support the landings. The boat was filled with explosives. He knew that if he didn't stop the fire, an explosion would light up the night sky, alert the enemy, all of his fellow comrades would be killed, and the invasion would be a failure. So Parle rushed to the source of smoke, hardly able to breathe, breathing the smoke in, and without a thought for his own safety, picked up the burning device with his bare hands, ran to the side of the boat, and hurled it into the sea as far as he could throw.

In that decisive moment, Parle didn't hesitate. He acted. And in that act, he helped ensure the success not only in the savings of his friends and those lives, but of the Allied landing itself, which turned out to be a very, very important victory. So the Allied forces went on to win the Sicily campaign. Critical in their ultimate victory was Parle. But before that final victory, the young, brave, beautiful sailor who helped to make it possible died from the smoke that had damaged his lungs so badly.

Ensign Parle had just turned 23. Yesterday would have been his 97th birthday. For his brave actions, Ensign Parle was awarded the Medal of Honor. This Memorial Day, we

remember him and all the brave men and women like him, who give their last breath in defense of our country. We honor their memory and their sacrifice. And we also hope to honor them with our deeds to prove worthy of their sacrifice.

Because there is no peace without those willing to bear the scars and wounds of war. There is no strength without those brave enough to protect the weak and people that need protection. And there is no prosperity at home without those willing to shoulder our burdens overseas. That glorious American flag represents the blood of patriots spilled in defense of freedom. It represents the courage that burns in American hearts. It represents the unity that binds us all together as one. And it represents the freedoms bestowed on us by almighty God.

You are the warriors of freedom. You are the protectors of that great American flag. You are the patriots who keep the fires of liberty burning. And you are the ones who protect the God-given freedoms that are the birthright of every single American child.

I am proud to be with you today as your Commander in Chief. I am honored to have had this time to spend with you. I am excited for the great adventures and achievements that all of us will accomplish together. May God bless you. May God bless our servicemembers. May God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:57 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan; Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada; Capt. Brent Trickett, commanding officer, Naval Air Station Sigonella; Prime Minister Theresa May of the United Kingdom; and King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. The First Lady referred to Sara Netanyahu, wife of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Queen Mathilde of Belgium.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : U.S. Naval Air Station in Sigonella, Italy.

*Locations:* Sigonella, Italy.

*Names:* Abbas, Mahmoud; Abe, Shinzo; Francis, Pope; May, Theresa; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Trickett, Brent; Trudeau, Justin P.J.; Trump, Melania.

*Subjects:* Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Canada : Prime Minister; Commerce, international : Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Egypt : Terrorist attack in Minya Province; Elections : 2016 Presidential and congressional elections; Holidays and special observances : Memorial Day; Holy See (Vatican City) : Pope; Iran : Nuclear weapons development; Israel : Prime Minister; Israel : Relations with U.S.; Italy : President Trump's visits; Italy : U.S. Naval Air Station in Sigonella; Japan : Prime Minister; Middle East : Arab-Israeli conflict, peace process; Middle East : Political unrest and violence; Middle East : Terrorism; North Africa, political unrest and violence; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Palestinian Authority and Palestinians : President; Saudi Arabia : King; Saudi Arabia : Trade with U.S.; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat; United Kingdom : Prime Minister; United Kingdom : Terrorist attack in Manchester.

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